# COMMON GROUND



JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1952

OLUME VI-NUMBER 1

PRICE: SIXPENCE

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**VOLUME VI NUMBER 1** 

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## The Psalms and the Modern World ISIDORE EPSTEIN

The Psalms have a timeless message for mankind. In this article Rabbi Dr. 1, Epstein shows how appropriate that message is for the world of today.

ODERN science has within recent years wrested from nature many of its innermost secrets and is giving man an apparent mastery over the natural process. The sovereignty thus gained has engendered in man a sense of pride by which he imagines himself, his nation, his culture and civilisation to be self-sufficient, and able to manage its own affairs in independence of God. This attitude of mind has had far-reaching consequences on man's moral conduct, personal and international, and has, in fact, been productive of those elements which threaten our social order with complete disintegration. That the distress of our world derives in the last resort from human pride is the judgment of no less a thinker than Bertrand Russell, who cannot be suspected of any particular bias in favour of religion. "Man, formerly too humble," he writes in his History of Western Philosophy, "begins to feel himself almost a god, In all this I feel a grave danger, the danger of what may be called 'cosmic impiety.' I am persuaded," he continues, "that this is the great danger of our times and that any philosophy which, however unintentionally, contributes to it is increasing the danger of vast social disaster."

Scientists, economists and politicians everywhere are busy planning some new kind of social and international order which would make the world, devastated by a global war, into a place fit for ordinary men and women to live in. Much of what these planners recommend so as to ensure every person enough food, adequate clothes and satisfactory homes, cannot but receive the unqualified approval of every one who loves his fellow men. But what these scientific and economic planners and politicians overlook is that all their plans are bound, sooner or later, to go awry, unless God is enthroned in the paradise they are seeking to establish. Without God the very goods acquired will become sources of

moral and consequent social disintegration. As Lewis Mumford well remarks in his Condition of Man, "At the very moment when mankind as a whole is fed, clothed and sheltered adequately, relieved from want and anxiety, there will arise new conditions calling equally for struggle, internal if not external, derived precisely from the goods that have been achieved."

And no wonder. Without God all human attempts to establish a world order of harmony and peace are attempts to solve the problem of human relations in the wrong way. They are efforts to heal the disease of humanity by external remedies, and as futile as would be the applications of a plaster over a festering sore fed by some internal disease. If the sores on the surface of society are to disappear, there must be an inner cleansing of the whole system. If society is to get rid of its diseases, there must be an inner cleansing of the hearts of the individuals who make up the society, and whose vices and failures constitute the vices and failures of the society to which they belong. But this regeneration of the heart can come only through the power of God working on the spirit of man. Without God, as we must have learned by now, the world cannot be civilised; nor is any society capable of realising its hopes or achieving happiness except it is founded on the acceptance of the rule of God and His laws.

#### Theme of the Psalms

All this is not new. It merely underlines what has ever been the persistent and most prominent claim of religion, that without God the world has no hope; and conversely, that with God the hope is sure.

This tremendous fact suffuses the whole of the Book of Psalms in which the Jewish genius for religion finds its highest expression. Here we have a soul's confession, in accents passionate and lyrical, of all great fundamental truths of religion—the awareness of God, man's spiritual kinship with the divine, his responsibility to God, his destiny, and the sanctity of life.

Significantly enough, the Book of Psalms begins with the theme of human happiness: "Happy is the man..." And who is the happy man? He who, by eschewing evil and all its corrosive influences and associations, frees his heart and mind for possession by God. This grand affirmation of the introductory psalm sets the keynote to the whole book.

The happiness which is the lot of him who lives a life with God is not a mere sedative, yielding inner peace and mystic spiritual delight, but an inspiration and consecration, a call to service and action—the doing of righteousness (Ps. XV, I). A life with God furthermore knows of no



Early Psalters, which were hand-written, were often beautifully illustrated.

This picture of King David tuning his harp is taken from a 12th century

Hungarian Psalter.

(Photo: University of Glasgow)

violence, wrong or dishonesty, in deed, word, or thought. It is a good life of "clean hands and pure heart." (Ps. XXIV, 2).

But a life without God is a wicked life. "The nabal (knave)\* says in his heart, There is no God"—and the result is: "They are corrupt. They have done abominable works; there is no one that doeth good." (Ps. XIV, 1). The mere outward confession of God is no guarantee against evil-doing. The nabal may, in fact, at times invoke God, and even claim providence to be on his side; but "in his heart" he says, "There is no God"—with disastrous results.

A life without God, however, is an unhappy life. It contains nothing of blessing or permanence. "The way of the wicked (their life work) shall perish." (Ps. I, 6). All their triumphs and successes, impressive and glittering as they may be, have no abiding value. They may rage and take counsel together, but in vain. All their machinations will fail to circumvent the ultimate realisation of God's plan and His moral purposes for the universe (Ps. II, 1ff.).

#### Gods will for the world

The Universe has been willed by God to be the scene of a divine order which will come into fulness of existence when "the Lord will have become King over the nations and taken His seat upon His holy throne." (Ps. XLVII, 8). To the consummation of this order the whole of human history is moving. Wars, pestilences, and all other visitations of nature are all directed by a beneficent providence towards the realisation of His plan in the universe. "Come and behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth." (Ps. XLVI, 9). Yes! These "desolations" too, are to the Psalmist's mind, in a sense the works of God; but they all tend to the higher end: the enthronement of the divine among the sons of men. "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (ibid., 11).

The most fundamental feature of the order which God has appointed for the universe is righteousness. God has made righteousness the main support of His divine governance. "Righteousness and justice are the foundations of His throne." (Ps. XCVII, 2). To sin against righteousness is therefore to sin against God, even as to sin against God is to sin against righteousness. To love evil is indeed to hate God, and to love God is to hate evil. "O ye that love God hate evil." (ibid, 1). Unrighteousness must consequently provoke His judgment; and it is because the mighty ones of the nations fail to establish in the world justice and mercy that divine judgment is over and over again being pronounced against them. (Ps. LXXXII).

<sup>\*</sup>This is the proper rendering of the Hebrew term; the rendering "fool" in the English version has no warrant.

#### Righteous purpose of divine judgment

But in the administration of divine judgment punishment is not an act of vengeance, but has for its purpose the establishment of universal righteousness, the whole of nature joining in the proclamation of the righteousness of God's government: "And the heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God is judge Himself." (Ps. L, 6). This affirmation is one which men are apt to deny. The divine sentence which, now and then, is passed in the inexorable language of historical events upon the character and quality of human achievements and culture leads many to exclaim: "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in His anger shut up His mercies?" (Ps. LXXVII, 9). Yet the upright of heart do not fail to recognise and acknowledge the righteous purpose of the divine judgment on the human apostasy which inspired it. "For judgment returns unto (i.e. is transformed into) righteousness and all the upright of heart follow it." (Ps. XCIV, 5).

This conviction of "all upright of heart" is grounded on the belief in the omnipotence and eternity of God whose righteous will must inevitably prevail. "For Thou, O God, art on high for evermore." (Ps. XCII, 8). Divine omnipotence was first made manifest in creation and continues to reveal itself in the constant renewal of the Universe which God upholds and maintains to the smallest detail; and it will be made manifest in the end in the utter destruction of the wicked who mar His fair creation. (Ps. CIV, 35). The destruction of evil will make clear the way for the rule of God and His Kingdom, in which all will bear witness to God's tender love and righteousness throughout the vast illimitable space of His dominion. (Ps. CIII). "Then the Lord [Himself] will rejoice in His works." (Ps. CIV, 31).

The strength of this kingdom will not consist in things material, but in the ascendancy of the spiritual over the material under the rule of the good and true on earth. The subsistence of the citizens of this kingdom will not be conditioned merely by the existence of material goods. They shall, so to speak, exist even in the absence of such conditions. "They shall bring forth fruit in old age. They shall be full of sap and green." (Ps. XCII, 15). Characteristic of this kingdom will be the cooperative action of all moral qualities and virtues. "Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and grace kiss each other" (Ps. LXXXV, 11)—evidence of the harmony of the individual and the human race, and expressive of the unity of human consciousness that will animate the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is the end which, in the conviction of the Psalmist, God has appointed all human history. In this divine plan individual

man occupies the central place. Although a mere infant, frail, set amid a stupendous universe that virtually annihilates him as a physical being, man has been crowned with "glory and honour," and endowed with the capacity and power to control, shape and direct all things to his own ends and to harness the forces of the universe to his service, so as to render the name of God "glorious in all the earth." (Ps. VIII, 2).

#### Man's relation to God

The important place which the individual occupies in the scheme of things derives from his relation to God. This relationship is variously apprehended in the psalms as that of a subject to his king, a slave to his master, a child to his father. But all these conceptions stem in turn from the fundamental relation of a creature to its creator: "For Thou hast formed my reins. Thou has knit me together in my mother's womb. My frame was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret." (Ps. CXXXIX, 13). As God's special creation, man has his very being grounded in God, and the whole marvel of what he is goes back to God his Maker. His life, thoughts and purposes are laid bare before God: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me; Thou understandest my thoughts from afar" (ibid, 1); and through this all-searching knowledge, God enters with power into man's life-physical and moraldetermining through every variation of condition and circumstance, his fate and destiny: "Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid Thine hand upon me." (ibid. 5).

Furthermore, as His handiwork, God has a purpose for every individual—the development of his character into divine likeness. For the fulfilment of this, God's purpose in man's life, man must co-operate with God. He must submit to the pressure of the Divine Hand upon Him and respond to the action of God upon his soul. Such a co-operation ensures the accomplishment of the process of the divine work in man, with man, and for man. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; Thy tender love endureth for ever; forsake not the works of Thy hand." (Ps. CXXXVIII, 8). The process may be arduous and painful; it may involve hard discipline and severe trials; but, whatever its character, if man lays open his heart and mind to the influence of divine scrutiny, God will lead him into the joy and peace of His presence and life everlasting. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. CXXXIX, 23-4).

It is to this great Divine Maker that Israel's genius has dedicated the Book of Psalms. Many moods and minds have gone to the making

of the Psalter—the lyrical, the plaintive, the triumphant, the despairing; but they all melt into one glorious song of praise to God. To give expression to this praise, the whole of creation is summoned by the Psalmist. (Pss. CXLVI-CL). Every pulse-beat is called upon to swell the unison of God's praise: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, Hallelujah." (Ps. CL 6). On this note the Book of Psalms closes; indeed a grand finale to the natural outburst of a soul possessed by God and satiated with the joy, harmony and peace of God's presence, in whose light men have walked in the darkest days, and may walk still in this torn, bewildered and distracted modern world of ours.

# Message of Epiphany

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T. CORBISHLEY

January 6th, the twelfth day after Christmas, is the Feast of the Epiphany. It commemorates the visit of the three wise men to the infant Jesus.

THE Magi who came to do homage to Christ at Bethlehem are amongst the many characters in Bible history of whom we so desperately seek to know a little more. The tantalising glimpses we have raise so many questions that we are perhaps in some danger of forgetting what is, after all, the important fact about them. At a time when the power and learning of the ancient world knew nothing of the Man born on earth, they came from a distant country, bringing gifts to symbolise their devotion and their faith. Whatever the background to their lives, whatever the nature of the learning that gave them the title of "wise men," whatever the extent of their wealth or their power, they stand for all time as companions to the shepherds who were first invited to welcome Christ at his birth. By thus completing the picture, they serve to emphasise the balance and the universality of his appeal.

There is often to be discovered a tendency to isolate and emphasise this or that aspect of Christian truth to justify some particular prejudice or party cry. Christ is claimed as the first socialist, the first communist even, because in his all-inclusive love he tended to single out for special comfort those in especial need; because he taught a lesson of self-forgetting gentleness and restraint in face of personal insult, he is claimed as a pacifist; because he taught a lesson of entire confidence in his Father, there are those who carry the idea of "taking no thought for the morrow" to the point of feckless and irresolute idleness. But the whole story of Christ's life and the full account of his teaching show him to be a man of single-minded purpose indeed, but one with a breadth of sympathy and outlook which excluded no aspect of human experience from its purview.

It is fitting then that, at the very outset of his human life, we find him receiving visits from such diverse and contrasting groups of men.

The significance of the visit of the shepherds is obvious enough. They represent the masses of mankind, the plain, simple, undistinguished multitudes that constitute the overwhelming majority of the human race. No one was to feel himself an outsider, beyond the reach of his interest and his love. In the end, this first audience suggests, nothing matters except the sheer possession of human personality. Social gifts, intellectual endowments, wealth, position, culture—all these are secondary. The essential qualification is to be a human individual.

#### Symbol of abiding truth

And then come the Magi. We know little enough about them. Their reading of the stars suggests an interest in astrological lore which was a characteristic intellectual pursuit of that eastern land, perhaps Babylonia, from which they came. Their gifts indicate the possession of some wealth. Their reception at the court of Herod implies some social standing. Tradition has turned them into kings. Possibly they were minor princes or tribal chieftains. In any case, as contrasted with the shepherds, they stand for wealth and position, learning and power. But, not less than the shepherds, they too come in and worship.

What does it mean to us, in the twentieth century? Is it all just a pleasant legend, a picturesque piece of mythological lore, to be classed with the stories of Isis and Mithras, and a score of other characters invented by the fantasy of man? Or must we see in this picture of three wise men, prostrate at the feet of a child hardly able to speak, the symbol and statement of an abiding truth? If the story is mere legend it is surely all but inexplicable. If we see it as the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy, the actual achievement of the glory foretold in the words: "All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him," we shall have eyes to see here the embodiment of one of the abiding lessons of the Old Testament. Again and again, in passage after passage, the Bible insists on the paramount need to recognise the power and authority of God.

In a curiously oblique way, the Greeks who lacked the profoundly monotheistic sense of the Jews, hinted at the same sort of truth in their doctrine of *Hubris*. The gods, they held, were jealous of human success in any field, especially in the field of political power. The king or tyrant who became too powerful, whose territories became too great, whose wealth became too vast was liable to fall under a Grudge. Let him be careful lest some great stroke of Fate should break his empire into pieces, should cast him into misery and degradation. The Greek notion may have



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
An early 16th century Italian stained glass window
(Photo; Victoria and Albert Museum.)

been little more than a generalisation from man's experience, not based on any especially religious belief. But who, as he contemplates the story of man's mastery over the forces of nature, of the accumulation of ever greater wealth, of the development of ever vaster empires, will deny that, somehow inherent in the very process of uncontrolled human achievement, a countervailing process of degeneration and impoverishment sets in. Control of power means uncontrolled destruction, accumulation of wealth accentuates poverty and distress, and growth of empire entails ever greater and more ruinous war. Must the sad paradox continue?

## Man's purposes subordinated to God's

The picture of the Magi at the feet of Christ points the answer. Power, wealth, intellect—these things corrupt and corrupt infallibly whenever they are pursued as ends in themselves, divorced from the pursuit of that end which is alone of abiding value, the immortal happiness of man. And how shall we know that we are pursuing man's immortal happiness save by the conscious subordination of all our effort to the plan of God? Man's purposes in this world will only finally prosper when they are subordinated to the purpose of God. Such subordination, whilst it may be achieved without a specifically religious motive by men who pursue justice and truth in selfless integrity, is best achieved, it would seem, where there is conscious recognition of the dominion of God.

If ever the world needed such an attitude of mind it does today. We have seen something of the horror and misery that can be unleashed upon the world not merely by men dedicated to deliberately godless ends, but even by men whose sole standard of success is the material, the secular, the positivist. Man, to whom has been entrusted dominion over the kingdom of nature, will achieve dominion over himself only when he recognises the source whence all authority comes. That is one of the fundamental truths to which Jew and Christian alike are dedicated. Man was driven out of paradise when he set himself in opposition to the ordinance of God. He will not return there in this world. But he can at least do something to reverse the sorry story

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Of man's first disobedience and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree . . .

He will do it, if at all, by emulating the Magi, who used their scientific lore to discover Christ, who brought their wealth to enrich his poverty, who were not ashamed to abase their power before his littleness.

Babe of the thousand birthdays, we that are young yet grey, White with the centuries, still can find no better thing to say, We that with sects and whims and wars have wasted Christmas Day.

Light Thou Thy censer, to Thyself, for all our fires are dim, Stamp Thou Thine image on our coin, for Caesar's face grows dim. And a dumb devil of pride and greed has taken hold of him.

We bring thee back great Christendom, churches and towns and towers. And if our hands are glad, O God, to cast them down like flowers, 'Tis not that they enrich Thine hands, but that they are saved from ours.

# Surveys of a Survey

W. W. SIMPSON

Some reflections and reactions to the Rowntree-Lavers Survey of English Life and Leisure.\*

"Life is not a vessel to be drained, but a cup to be filled." So runs the ancient Chinese proverb which the authors of this important survey of English life and leisure have chosen as their "text." Its appropriateness is obvious, for it is not so many years since one of the two authors, Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree, published the results of his enquiry into the conditions of poverty then existing in York, a city which he chose, partly because he knew it so well, and partly because there was no reason to suppose that conditions in York were so very different from those in other centres.

Today, partly as a result of the stirrings of conscience prompted by that and other social surveys, conditions of life and labour have vastly improved. But, as so often happens in this curiously paradoxical world, progress in the direction of solving one set of problems has merely given rise to a new and hardly less disturbing crop. If it is true that life no longer appears merely as "a vessel to be drained," as so many lives were being drained away in misery and squalor a generation ago, and that we can now begin to think of it as "a cup to be filled," we are still a very long way from having discovered a completely satisfactory answer to the question "with what?"

And that, in effect, is the question which prompts this latest survey, for, as Mr. Rowntree himself explains, when he made his second social survey of York, the result of which was published in his book *Poverty and Progress*, he was struck by the inadequacy of the means provided for the satisfactory recreation of the citizens. When he and his colleague Mr. G. B. Lavers set out on this new survey of English life and leisure they quickly realised that "recreation" is a very comprehensive word, and that any attempt to ascertain what facilities for leisure should be provided would necessarily involve not only an enquiry into the ways in which people are already spending their newly acquired leisure time, but also "a study of the cultural and spiritual life of the nation."

It is as greatly to the credit of these two investigators as it may well prove in the long run to the advantage of the nation as a whole, that having made this discovery, they did not abandon a project which must have seemed well nigh impossible of fulfilment. They themselves would, I suspect, be the first to acknowledge the limitations of what they have in in fact accomplished. But this at least is certain, that there is information

<sup>&</sup>quot;Survey of English Life and Leisure," by B. Seebohm Rowntree and G. B. Lavers.
Published by Longman's Green & Co., price 15s.

enough here on a sufficient number of vitally important issues to give rise to as many questions as we can hope to answer satisfactorily in our lifetime. And they are all questions which, in varying degree, concern us all.

#### Widespread interest in the survey

That is undoubtedly why its publication aroused so much interest in so many quarters. Indeed, rumour has it that the volume became a "best seller" almost over night, though the cynic might well add that it probably did so for all the wrong reasons. For its authors may well have found little but cold comfort in some of the headlines and captions which greeted it. Here, for example, are a few of them: "A picture of England that gets out of focus," "Aren't Britons beasts?... some advice we could do without" and, in one of the religious weeklies, "A book that will do great harm... authors who hit the clergy below the belt."

The pattern of the survey is by now familiar. The book opens with a series of 220 "case histories," vignettes of the life and leisure interests of two hundred persons over the age of twenty years, and of twenty younger persons. There follows a series of chapters on commercialised gambling, drink, smoking, sexual promiscuity, honesty, the cinema, the the stage, broadcasting, dancing, reading habits, adult education and religion—and there are very few people in this country who have not felt deeply, argued strongly about, or themselves indulged in one, some or all of these forms of recreation! The survey concludes with two chapters on leisure time activities in High Wycombe, and for purposes of comparison, in the Scandinavian countries.

Any further edition of the book might well include either as an appendix to the collection of case histories or as an additional chapter a survey of the published reactions to them. Some of them were probably unpublishable! I have just—after an interval of some months since reading the book itself—been working through a small but interesting collection of newspaper cuttings about it. Before I go on to say any more about that I might as well admit that I realise only too well that I am merely adding another to the collection and offering myself to Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Lavers as a potential exhibit in the appendix I have suggested.

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"This report," says one of its most severe critics, "shows how impossible it is for investigators to avoid subjectivism." Whether one accepts this reviewer's judgment or not—and my own impression was that these two investigators had shown an unusual degree of objectivity—his particular contribution to the literature about the book demonstrates with convincing and quite unintentional clarity how difficult it is for the reviewer to be objective.

#### Survey's real merits

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es he While, however, some of the reviews are remarkable for their superficiality, others have done great service in focussing attention on the real merits of the study. An anonymous contributor to the *Times Literary Supplement*, for example, who clearly had no personal axe to grind, said that "it is not perhaps too fanciful to imagine that *English Life and Leisure* may turn out to be the starting-point of a great movement for the lightening and ennobling of the leisure-time of millions." Another serious, appreciative and essentially constructive appraisal of the book appeared in the *Spectator* over the name of Lord Beveridge.

It is, in fact, Lord Beveridge's article which, perhaps more than any other of the reviews that I have read, underlines what should be the particular interest of all readers of *Common Ground* in this survey. After referring to "the many public spirited individuals and agencies working devotedly to provide worth-while uses of leisure" he goes on to make the point that "the fault today lies not in insufficient supply of better alternatives for the use of leisure, but in insufficiency of demand."

The problem there, in part at least, is how to create the demand for the worth-while. It is clearly a problem that will not be quickly or easily solved, for it is very largely a matter of sound education at the adult's and not merely the child's level. That some progress is already being made in this direction the authors themselves acknowledge at several points. They mention, for example, in connection with broadcasting that they have been particularly impressed, among other things, by "the manner in which good music has been introduced by the radio into millions of homes, so that even where the names of Haydn, Mozart, and many others are still not regarded, their music exercises a cultural influence."

Yet, even when all allowances have been made for efforts and influences of this kind, the problems raised by this book remain as matters of urgency, and the total impression created by it one of mingled depression and a desire to "do something about it." For, as the writer of a review in another of the religious weeklies puts it: "with all the vaunted advance in education, community centres, increased opportunity for leisure, security of employment and the rest of the programme (good in itself) of a welfare state, there emerges a picture of material advance indeed, but one without direction, without destiny, without God."

## The place of religion

It is precisely at this point that the survey itself appears at its most depressing and its most challenging. Without exception all the critics

I have read seize on the chapter about religion as being the most significant. "If there is one thing that does stand out among all the persons interviewed," says a reviewer in one of the national dailies, "it is the decline in Church going and the very pronounced lack of interest in any form of religion."

The authors are themselves "certain that people will never again seek from the Churches in their present form the inspiration that they should obtain from them." Any hope of religious revival, they feel, lies in the growth of "small groups similar to communist cells in which common problems of the relevance of Christian belief to daily life might be worked out by a co-operative effort that would both enrich and strengthen the religious lives of the individuals who make up such groups."

The fact that many may feel this to be little more than a counsel of despair, a mouse brought forth by a mountain, should not, however, be allowed to blind us to the serious and searching character of the findings, both statistical and personal, reported in the earlier part of this particular chapter.

It is interesting, incidentally, to find the Council of Christians and Jews mentioned as one of a number of organisations "with a specifically religious purpose" the sum total of whose efforts "is a highly important part of the nations' religious life." And that perhaps is the appropriate point at which to bring these rambling notes to an end, for this survey of English life and leisure will fall short of one at least of its purposes if it does not give its readers furiously to think what part they themselves can play in finding the answer to the question—with what shall the cup of life be filled?

# The Jerusalem Biblical Zoo

A. SHULOW

Deep within a heavily wooded grove of pines and other trees in the Holy City, a growing collection of animals and birds inhabit the only zoo of its kind in the world: the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo.

WHAT makes the Jerusalem Zoo unique is its twofold purpose: to form as complete a collection as possible of the animals, birds, reptiles and insects mentioned in the Bible; and secondly to house the wild creatures known to have been indigenous to the Holy Land throughout the ages, from Biblical times down to the present day.

The Zoo's thirty acres cover the eastern slope of a hill which descends gently to a wide and picturesque valley. The area is thickly studded with natural rock formations which, with the pines, eucalyptus, cypresses, olive and fig trees, constitute ideal grounds for the housing of the animals. The natural configuration of the ground provides excellent cover from the

west and northwest winds, affording protective shelter for tender birds and small animals from the elements, especially in Jerusalem's severe winter.

The Zoo has become Jerusalem's most popular outdoor resort, and on every clear day throughout the year animal lovers of all ages, as well as people seeking a pleasant fresh-air spot in which to relax in the mountain shade, stream towards the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo.

#### Beginnings of the Zoo

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But the Zoo did not always enjoy these ideal surroundings. It wandered for years from one temporary and inadequate site to another before it reached its permanent home.

Its history dates back to 1940, when a zoology instructor at the Hebrew University put up a few small pens in a courtyard in one of the City's central streets and formed a "Live Corner" for the amusement and education of Jerusalem's children. A goat, a pair of rabbits, a dog, some hens—these were the earliest inhabitants of what later became the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo. When a wolf was added to the collection, the courtyard was no longer suitable. With the help of a number of public-spirited citizens, the "Live Corner" was moved to a one-acre plot of land, lent by the City Council, on the northern outskirts of the town. The first gift of cash was presented to the Zoo by Mr. Moshe Sharett, now the Israel Minister for Foreign Affairs—fifteen pounds on behalf of a donor who wished to remain anonymous.

Here the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo truly came into being. Its aims were outlined, new animals and birds were quickly acquired, and the Society of Friends of the Zoo was formed, with hundreds of members and supporters. For five years the Zoo expanded steadily, and hundreds of specimens were housed.

With the end of the World War, however, the Zoo again had to look for new quarters. The plot lent by the City Council had earlier been promised for a war veteran's housing project, and building was due to begin. In 1947, therefore, the Zoo was again moved, this time to what was then expected to be its permanent quarters. The new site was on Mount Scopus, adjoining the grounds of the Hebrew University, and was admirably situated in a pine grove overlooking the deep valley leading to the Dead Sea. The area was fenced, cages were built, corrals were put up. The first animals were transferred.

But during the very process of moving, the animals of the Zoo came under the first fire of enemy guns. The United Nations had adopted its resolution partitioning Palestine and creating the State of

Israel, and Arab guns were soon aimed at Jews in Jerusalem. The last animals to be moved to Mount Scopus had to run a gauntlet of fire.

The siege of Jerusalem began. For months there was little food and less water. Mount Scopus was surrounded by the enemy. The Zoo was shelled and sniped at. Some of the best specimens were killed by mortar bombs and artillery shells. The keepers freed a number of animals, such as deer and gazelles, rather than subject them to the rigours and hardships of siege under fire. (One gazelle had become so attached to her keeper that she refused to leave, but stayed close to the perimeter of the Zoo; she was killed one morning by a sniper's bullet). Some animals died of diseases induced by malnutrition and lack of proper care. The keepers stuck to their posts throughout, frequently crawling to the cages at night with food for their charges, while bullets flew overhead.

The war came to an end, but even after the armistice Mount Scopus remained inaccessible to the public. Only a handful of animals were



DR. SHULOW WITH TWO OF THE ZOO'S FALLOW DEER

left. The Zoo was doing the Jerusalem public little good where it was. Again it became necessary for the Zoo to move—this time to its permanent home.

In September, 1950, after almost three years of isolation, the lion, the wallabies, the eagles, and about twenty other animals and birds—all that survived the war of about 300 specimens—were moved to their present quarters. New animals were acquired: by purchase, barter or gift, both in Israel and abroad. The Society of Friends of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, dormant for three years, resumed its activities. Once again Jerusalem had a zoo, and was quick to take advantage of it. In the first six months of 1951, the Zoo played host to thousands of visitors.

#### **Biblical references**

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The unique character of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo is evident on the bars or netting of every cage and corral. As in other zoos, each cage bears the name, habitat and description of the animal occupying it. But in the Biblical Zoo a special plaque is affixed to each cage. This bears an appropriate Bible verse mentioning the animal. The plaque on the lion's cage is inscribed with the verse from the Proverbs: "A lion which is the strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any." The inscription on the corrals of the red deer and fallow deer (both extinct in the Holy Land for many years until restored by the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo) is from II Samuel and reads: "Light of foot as a wild roe."

Bible students as well as animal lovers are attracted to this unusual zoo, and many have become members of the Society of Friends of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo. The revenue derived from admission fees and membership dues is now sufficient to cover the costs of feeding the animals and maintaining the Zoo.

These revenues are not enough, however, to provide funds for capital expenditure in the form of new animals, construction of cages, and similar development. Moreover, most of the animals needed by the Zoo can only be purchased abroad against foreign exchange. Steps have been taken to organise Societies of Friends of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo in foreign countries, in some of which animal lovers and Bible students have shown a keen interest in the Zoo's development.

A number of public organisations have been helpful to the Zoo. The Jerusalem Municipal Council has been particularly generous, especially since the Zoo's transfer to the new site, which itself was made available by the Council.

The Council has allocated funds, supplied labour, beautified the grounds, planned the Zoo's gardens, provided a special water main,

and in many other ways has contributed substantially to the Zoo's success.

#### Plans for a Vivarium

Except for the animal cages, the Zoo has as yet no permanent structures of any kind. It would fail in its educational purpose if it failed to provide certain facilities which can best be made use of in permanent buildings. The first of these projects is to be the Vivarium. Plans for this building have already been prepared, and construction is expected to begin shortly.

The Vivarium's main feature will be a collection of insects and small reptiles native to Israel, some of which are to be found in no other country. These will be on view in conditions closely approximating their natural habitat and affording the casual visitor and serious student alike an excellent opportunity of examining their lives and habits.

In addition, the Vivarium will contain a lecture hall and cinema equipment for films on animals and allied subjects, both popular and scientific.

The Jerusalem Biblical Zoo at present occupies only about half the land allocated to it, and this area itself is spacious enough to provide ample room for expansion and growth. The Zoo's circumstances and the shortage of building material and of foreign exchange has hampered the construction of additional cages, corrals and open air dens. Most of the animals in the Zoo will be accommodated in "homes" unconfined by bars or walls, and separated from the public by moats or similar devices. The terrain of the grounds, with its many trees, rock formations and slopes, lends itself admirably to this programme.

#### Children's Corner

The Zoo hopes to increase its educational and amusement facilities for young and old alike. Thousands of children are regular visitors to the Zoo, but the Zoo aims at having every schoolchild visit the Zoo on a guided tour, together with his teacher and classmates, at least once a year, and preferably more often. The Children's Corner at present contains goats, donkeys, rabbits, tortoises and poultry, which the young visitors are free to approach and pet. This department is earmarked for early expansion. Now the children have only the donkeys to ride. Before long, they will be able to perch high atop a swaying camel.

Even with the new acquisitions, the Zoo has far fewer animals and birds than it did before the siege of Jerusalem. Its most urgent need is for animals. Years must necessarily pass before the Zoo will be able to present to the public as representative a collection as possible of the

creatures mentioned in the Bible; perhaps a complete collection is even impossible. The Zoo does not restrict itself to "Biblical" animals alone, and welcomes other species such as the wallaby and the badger, of which there are families on the grounds. Where the Zoo has a choice, however, it seeks to acquire specimens which contribute to its essential character and purpose. To obtain animals, the Zoo has recourse to various means, and specimens are being slowly collected by purchase, barter and gift, both in Israel and abroad.

# Sacred Days and Seasons

In order to avoid the arrangement of meetings during major religious observances, readers of "Common Ground" may like to note the following dates in their diaries.

#### CHRISTIAN

LENT-First day.

Wednesday, February 27th.

GOOD FRIDAY-

Friday, April 11th.

EASTER SUNDAY—

Sunday, April 13th.

ASCENSION DAY— Thursday, May 22nd.

WHIT SUNDAY—

Sunday, June 1st.

TRINITY SUNDAY— Sunday, June 8th.

ADVENT—First Sunday, November 30th.

CHRISTMAS DAY-

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Thursday, December 25th.

#### **JEWISH**

PASSOVER— Thursday, April 10th to

Thursday, April 17th.

PENTECOST—First day. Friday, May 30th.

NEW YEAR 5713-

Saturday, September 20th.

DAY OF ATONEMENT-

Monday, September, 29th.

TABERNACLES—

Saturday, October 4th to Saturday, October 11th.

REJOICING OF THE LAW—

Sunday, October 12th.

CHANUCAH—First day, Saturday, December 13th

TOLERANCE — Can it be Taught?

By A. I. POLACK

With a foreword by ROBERT BIRLEY Headmaster of Eton College.

Price 6d. (Postage 1½d.)

THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS 162a, Strand, London, W.C.2.

#### THE EARL OF PERTH

Though we had known for some time of his illness the announcement of the death of the Earl of Perth came as a real shock to those of us who have been privileged to know and to work with him in this Council of which he had served as a Vice-President since its establishment ten years ago. His occupancy of that office was no mere formality. During the early and formative years of the Council's existence he was regular in his attendance at meetings of the Executive Committee. Later, when for reasons of health and the pressure of other affairs it became increasingly difficult for him to attend meetings, he was always ready to be consulted, either in person at the House of Lords, or by correspondence. His own letters were always written in his own handwriting which in its clarity and strength was in a very real sense the index of his character. "Unfortunately," he wrote in his last letter to the Secretary in October last, "I fear it may be a long time before I can attend a meeting, as I am not making the progress my doctors hoped. However, I can always express my views in writing, if any special point arises."

The story of his splendid record of service in the cause of international understanding and good will has been fully told elsewhere, and for that we share the gratitude that many in this and other lands will feel. But we have also our own more personal reasons for gratitude. In his passing we have lost not merely a distinguished honorary officer of the Council, but a real and personal friend, of whom we shall always entertain the most grateful memories.

His work as a statesman, as a distinguished lay representative of the Roman Catholic Church, and as a public servant will be recorded in the histories of our time. But his abiding memorial will be in the hearts of those who learned by personal association not only to respect but also to love him.

# Commentary

# Religious Freedom

A stimulating discussion on "Religious Freedom" marked the end of the annual four-day Christmas Holiday conference for school boys and girls organised by the Council for Education in World Citizenship at Central Hall, Westminster. This year 2,500 young people from Britain

and overseas heard lectures on many facets of Human Rights, which had been selected as the subject for study, and this session, in which Canon John Collins (Chancellor of St. Paul's Cathedral and Chairman of Christian Action), Mr. Michael Derrick (Assistant Editor of *The Tablet*), Rabbi Leslie Edgar (Minister of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue) and Mr. Ismail de Yorke (Secretary of the Muslim Society) took part, was a memorable climax.

The Chairman, the Rev. W. W. Simpson, opened the discussion by saying that, until a few years ago, it would have been inadvisable to invite four speakers of such diverse religious views to an open forum, and, in some countries, even today, a similar team would not be allowed such freedom of expression.

No matter how different their religious beliefs, however, when each member of the team gave a ten-minute exposition of religious freedom as he understood it, the points of agreement far outweighted those of dissension. Each speaker stressed the doctrine of charity, of tolerance and of respect for other religions, and, above all, of belief in one God.

As soon as the last speaker had finished his brief exposition, two surprisingly long queues of questioners formed on either side of the platform. Their questions—and in some cases their orations—touched on almost every subject connected with religion: "Can you convert an African to a particular faith, and then tell him that other religions are right too?" "Do we not undermine our own faith by tolerating others?" "Is there any action we could take, short of war, to combat religious persecution?" "Should we tolerate agnosticism or atheism?" "How should parents educate a child born of mixed marriage?" There were questions on antisemitism in Britain, and on religion in Russia, and each questioner received a full answer; never was a complicated question evaded or a controversial one glossed over.

Long after the session had ended, the audience were discussing all they had heard. In this whole conference there were strong grounds for hoping that, provided they are adequately instructed in this most difficult of subjects before the deeprooted seeds of prejudice are nurtured and reach the surface, the members of this generation will understand the meaning of tolerance and will practice it.

#### Common Sense

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From time to time in the pages of Common Ground we have commented on or quoted from Common Sense, the monthly magazine of the South African Society of Jews and Christians. This magazine was launched in 1939, "primarily," to quote a statement in the December

1951 issue, "in order to combat antisemitism and to foster better understanding and good will between the Jewish community and its Christian neighbours."

But its sponsors recognised from the first, as we have done with Common Ground, that their journal must have a wider purpose. They understood "that one form of prejudice could not be isolated from other manifestations of irrational thinking and group antagonisms or from the deep-seated economic and social problems of our society."

"Thus," the writer continues, "Common Sense developed into a journal devoted to the combating of all forms of racial and group prejudice, the promotion of inter-faith and inter-cultural education and the fostering of constructive thinking on South Africa's major problems."

This all makes very good sense. Unhappily, however, these extracts are taken from an editorial article entitled: "We say Goodbye," the purport of which is to announce, with deep regret, that "with this issue (No. 12 of Vol. 12) Common Sense will cease publication." We are left to infer that the reasons for this are primarily financial, for, the article states, "the magazine has never been a commercial enterprise."

But whatever the reason, we can only deplore the fact, for South Africa of all countries at the present time can ill afford to lose the influence of so well informed and so enlightened a publication.

For our part, we can only express the admiration which we are confident we share with many others for the splendid work and influence of *Common Sense* during the past twelve years; our deep regret that we shall no longer enjoy the monthly stimulus of its appearance on our editorial desk; and our hope that it may one day be revived. In the meantime we shall do our best not merely to maintain but to extend the influence of *Common Ground*, which seeks to further the same ideals as those which have inspired the editors of *Common Sense*.

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# ● The Young Idea

"Any parent with a sense of social responsibility must be seriously perturbed at this year's crop of adventure stories for children of about ten upwards." So wrote Marghanita Laski in an omnibus review of children's books published under the general heading "The Young Idea" in the Christmas book number of *The Spectator*. And why? Because in her judgment, many of the books she had reviewed seemed likely to have an exactly opposite effect from the tenets of the P.E.N. Club whose members pledge themselves "to use what influence they have in favour of good will and mutual respect between nations" and "to do their utmost to dispel race, class and national hatreds."

The difficulty arises, of course, as Miss Laski points out, from the necessity of supplying adventure stories with villains. Several of the villains she met in this particular crop of books were "totally, utterly bad without mitigation, having presumably chosen evil when good was available." They were of a completely different type, for example, from John Buchan's villains who "were shown as serving what they believed to be right," while his heroes were "often momentarily inspired by the enemy vision" so that "the final victory was not only the victory of a superior cunning but of a superior faith, and the struggle was considerably above the moral level at which it remains in these children's books, that—if one discards the thrills—of superior thuggery."

We are grateful to Miss Laski for focussing attention on this very important issue, which, incidentally, is as relevant in the case of many of the villains of the cinema and the comic as of the particular set of books under review. The problem will not be quickly or easily solved, but at least we may hope for a greater awareness on the part of the writers of adventure stories of the importance of helping the young to develop the right sort of idea about other people. If they succeed in that they need have little anxiety about the need for excitement. Few things are more exciting than *real* life.

# **About Ourselves**

On December 4th a Willesden Council of Christians and Jews was formally established at a public meeting at which the Mayor of Willesden, Alderman F. Trevor Evans, J.P., presided, and at which the Bishop of Willesden and Rev. Ephraim Levine were the chief speakers.

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The Mayor said the object of forming the Council was to create even closer co-operation between the religious groups in Willesden. The Council should not concern itself solely with the problem of Jews and Christians. The borough had a large Roman Catholic community, and a large number of coloured people lived locally.

At the annual Conference of Educational Associations held at King's College, London, during the Christmas vacation, the Council of Christians and Jews had a special section, arranged an exhibition of literature, and had an open meeting addressed by the Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham University,

Mr. B. L. Hallward. The title of Mr. Hallward's talk was "Religious Teaching in a world of Conflicting Loyalties."

- In response to many requests, the Council of Citizens of East London has extended its University Tutorial Course on "Group Relations" for a second term. Several of the lecturers from the first term have agreed to take part again in the second term.
- On March 20th the Council of Christians and Jews will celebrate the tenth anniversary of its formation. It is intended to mark this tenth year the Council's existence in some suitable way, and to make the next issue of Common Ground (March-April) a special anniversary number. Among other special articles will be one by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a "Focus on the Council" by Mr. Denis Bardens, producer of the "Focus" programmes of the B.B.C.

- The Cardiff Council of Christians and Jews held a public meeting on January 8th at which Rev. Ivor Cassam, who has recently returned from America, spoke on "Human Relationships in America." This meeting was one in a series which is being arranged by the Cardiff branch during the winter.
- On January 15th, a small-scale conference of children from six different schools in East London was held, as part of the programme of the schools' committee of the Council of Citizens of East London. This conference will be a pilot project for a larger conference of schoolchildren which it is hoped to hold later in the year.
- In Leeds, a visit to the New Synagogue was recently arranged for a party from St. Clement's Church, Chapeltown. The visitors were received by the minister, Rev. S. Brown, who showed them round the Synagogue and gave a short talk on Jewish customs and ritual.

Leeds local council is also arranging for a number of "Trio Team" visits to Church and other groups. In these meetings members of different faiths will open informal discussions in which the audience will be encouraged to participate from the outset.

• The denominational societies of the University of London held a joint meeting at King's College on Tuesday, November 27th, under our auspices. The speakers were A. C. F. Beales, Lecturer in Education at King's College, a Roman Catholic; Rev. Ronald Rees, Secretary of the International Department of the British Council of Churches, a Methodist; and Col. the Rev. I. Levy, Senior Jewish Chaplain to His Majesty's Forces. The Rev. W. W. Simpson took the chair.

Each of the speakers was asked to say what he meant by toleration. It was interesting to note how closely the three definitions approximated.

# **Book Notes**

#### "Fratres"

#### Club Boys in Uniform

By Basil L. Q. Henriques (Secker and Warburg, 12s. 6d.)

This is a deeply moving and very challenging book, one which I hope many Christians and Jews will read, for it has much to say to both.

"Fratres" is the motto of the Oxford and St. George's Jewish Lads Club whose Warden, Mr. Basil Henriques, published a Club magazine throughout both world wars for circulation to Club members serving in the Forces. To the magazine also he gave the same title, and it is difficult to imagine anything more appropriate, for the spirit of brotherhood is evident in every page of this present anthology of extracts from the fifty-eight editions of the magazine which appeared at regular intervals from the 15th of October 1939 to the end of the war.

The editor was never at a loss for material, for the magazine was chiefly composed of extracts from letters written "Home" to the Club by no fewer than 665 club members who served their country in all sections of His Majesty's Forces and in all parts of the world. Each issue also contained an article by the Warden himself who, as various of the extracts reveal, was familiarly and affectionately known to club-members as "the Gaffer."

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A single sentence quoted from one of the letters may serve as an eloquent comment on what the magazine meant to those for whom it was first produced: "When I received "Fratres" I crawled into my slit trench and read every word carefully, as if each word were worth its weight in gold, and believe me it was." What it can mean to those outside the charmed circle of its original recipients who may be privileged to read this anthology each must determine for himself, but it is interesting to learn that Queen Mary, to whom the Warden showed one of the earlier numbers, later sent a message through one of her Ladies-in-Waiting commenting first, on the wonderful "esprit-de-corps

#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

Rev. Father Thomas Corbishley, S.J., is Master of Campion Hall, Oxford.

Rabbi Dr. Isidore Epstein, B.A., is Principal of Jews' College.

Dr. Aharon Shulow is director of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, and lecturer in the department of Zoology at the Hebrew University.

Rev. W. W. Simpson is General Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Signed articles express the views of the contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews,

that the Club succeeds in instilling into its members," and secondly on "the delightful harmonious way in which Jews and Christians work and play together. This ought to make for something really splendid after the war."

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den ders, her irst, orps It ought indeed! But will it? Certainly it will not be for want of trying on the part of Basil Henriques and his Club members if it does not. But they will need all the help and sympathetic understanding of every reader of this book, and then more, if the purpose of the magazine, which was defined as to "keep our Club members in touch with one another . . . and also to help Jews and Christians to get nearer to one another in mutual understanding and friendship," is to be fulfilled.

Detailed comment on the contents of the volume is, alas, out of the question. There is so much here that is fascinating, revealing, humilating too, and oh, so challenging. For we are privileged to see something of the kind of life that people in the Forces lived, the things they did and the places they visited . "I feel just like a human ping-pong ball" wrote one, while another who thought the Taj Mahal "quite im-

pressive" went on to express his personal preference for "the Regent, Stamford Hill, any time". . . but, and this is the real significance of the book, there are penetrating insights into their hopes and fears, their doubts and aspirations, the conflict of the hatred, compassion and a sense of justice as some of them travelled with the liberating armies through Germany and, of course, the determination with which some of them pledged themselves to the task of rebuilding in the post-war world.

How remote some of it seems today. And yet how challengingly near. It is fitting perhaps that the Warden himself should have the last word, that the Warden for in the issue which appeared in November 1945 he wrote: "If this partnership can continue, then Jews and Christians together can make a mighty contribution to the nation's But already the ugly evils of prejudice and ignorance are beginning to show themselves among both Jews and Christians. primary task before every Jew today is to intensify the influence of Judaism in the life of the Jew. If that is achieved, the rest will be easy. Perhaps the same kind of things are needed in the Christian Church also."

Owing to limitations of space, reviews of other books received have been held over and will appear in the next issue of "Common Ground."

# ONE GOD — The Ways He is Worshipped and Served.

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